

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 17368 251755Z

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FROM ENVOY WALTERS' OFFICE

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TAGS: PGOV, LE, VT

SUBJ: VATICAN SEEKS TO FORTIFY PEACE IN LEBANON

1. THE VATICAN TOOK ADVANTAGE OF SEVERAL OPPORTUNITIES DURING THE MONTH OF OCTOBER TO UNDERSCORE ITS COMMITMENT TO THE PRESERVATION OF LEBANON AS A UNITED, PLURALISTIC STATE. THE TWO MOST SIGNIFICANT OCCASIONS WERE THE PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS BY THE NEW LEBANESE AMBASSADOR, ANTOINE FATAL, ON OCTOBER 7, AND THE CEREMONIES RELATING TO THE CANONIZATION OF THE MARONITE MONK MAKHLOUF ON OCTOBER 9. THE VATICAN NEWSPAPER AND RADIO ALSO HIGHLIGHTED THESE TWO EVENTS.

2. THE NEW LEBANESE AMBASSADOR TO HOLY SEE. DURING PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS OF NEW LEBANESE AMBASSADOR, POPE PAUL NOTED "THE PAINFUL ORDEALS" LEBANON HAD JUST EXPERIENCED AND ITS STILL PRECARIOUS SITUATION. HE ALSO NOTED THE VITALITY AND RESOURCEFULNESS OF LEBANON WHICH WILL PERMIT ITS RECOVERY. THE PONTIF THEN STATED THE VATICAN'S COMMITMENT TO

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PAGE 02 ROME 17368 251755Z

THE RECOVERY OF LEBANON IN FOLLOWING TERMS: "ON OUR SIDE, WE WILL NOT BE CONTENT WITH GOOD WORDS OF COMPASSION AND ENCOURAGEMENT; WE WILL CONTINUE, IN UNION WITH OUR BROTHER PATRIARCHS AND BISHOPS OF THE COUNTRY, TO CARRY OUT OUR WORK OF PERSUASION, AMONG THE LEBANAVE, AND ALSO AMONG ALL THE PARTIES CONCERNED, AND EVEN THE INTERNATIONAL AUTHORITIES,

TO CONSTRUCT THE FUTURE IN PEACE." HE FURTHER STATED THAT THE HOPE THAT ALL THE INHABITANTS OF LEBANON WILL BE ABLE TO LIVE AND WORK THERE IN "THE TRANQUILITY OF ORDER," AND ACCORDING TO A "JUST DISTRIBUTION OF RIGHTS AND DUTIES," AS BEFITTING FELLOW CITIZENS AND BELIEVERS.

3. CANONIZATION. SOME 5,000 LEBANESE MADE THE PILGRIMAGE TO ROME FROM LEBANON AND OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD FOR THE CANONIZATION OF SAINT MAKHLOUF OCTOBER 9. THE GOL WAS REPRESENTED BY AN OFFICIAL DELEGATION HEADED BY EX-PRESIDENT CHARLES HELOU AND BY SIX MINISTERS--MOSLEM AND CHRISTIAN, AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER NAXZIM AKKARI. ALSO PRESENT WAS A PARTY OF 20 DEPUTIES, REPRESENTING VARIOUS RELIGIOUS GROUPS, HEADED BY MICHELE SASSINE, THE PRESIDENT OF PARLIAMENT (HIMSELF A GREEK ORTHODOX). AMONG OTHER VIPS WERE PIERRE GEMAYEL AND THE MOSLEM AUTHOR DR. MUSTAFA GEHA. AMONG RELIGIOUS PERSONALITIES ATTENDING THE CEREMONY WERE THE MARONITE PATRIARCH (KHORAICHE) AND 12 BISHOPS AND SIX EASTERN PATRIARCHS (FROM ALEXANDRIA, ANTIOCH, JERUSALEM, BABYLON AND CELISIA). THE POPE'S HOMILY FOR THE OCCASION STRESSED THE VIRTUES OF "CONTEMPLATION" AND "CONCORD" EXEMPLIFIED BY THE NEW SAINT. STATING THAT LEBANON HAS ALWAYS BEEN A "MEETING PLACE" OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 ROME 17368 251755Z

EAST AND WEST AND THE DEFACTO HOMELAND FOR DIVERSE POPULATIONS, WHO ARE ROOTED WITH COURAGE TO THEIR LAND AND RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS, HE CALLED ON THE NEW SAINT TO HELP LEBANON "OVERCOME THE PRESENT DIFFICULTIES, TO HEAL THE OPEN WOUNDS AND TO GO FORWARD IN HOPE." (HE EXPRESSED ESSENTIALLY THE SAME THEME IN HIS SUNDAY (OCTOBER 9TH) ANGELUS MESSAGE TO SOME 40,000 PILGRIMS GATHERED IN ST. PETER'S SQUARE AND AT THE GENERAL AUDIENCE OF OCTOBER 12.)

4. COMMENT: VATICAN SOURCES HAVE TOLD US THAT INDEED THE OCCASIONS PROVIDED THE POPE AND OTHER VATICAN OFFICIALS WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE LEBANON'S STABILITY. VATICAN OFFICIALS SOUGHT THROUGH THEIR VARIOUS ENCOUNTERS WITH BOTH CHRISTIAN AND MOSLEM LEBANESE LEADERS TO ENCOURAGE THE RESUMPTION OF A POLITICAL DIALOGUE AND TO COOPERATE CLOSELY IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE LEBANESE ECONOMY. BY STRESSING THE THEME OF COEXISTENCE AMONG DIVERSE PEOPLES THE POPE AND THE VATICAN WANTED TO BRING HOME,

PARTICULARLY TO THE MARONITES, VATICAN COMMITMENT
TO UNITED LEBANON AND OPPOSITION TO ANY SORT OF
PARTITION.HOLMES

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